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SPECIAL BULLETIN

ON

WOMEN AND WAR

Remarks at Graduation of Nurses from Training School,
June 4, 1917, by W. B. Hinsdale, Dean of
Homoeopathic Medical School and Med-
ical Director of Hospital



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WOMEN AND WAR

The present generation have little but an historical knowledge of war and its attendant conditions. Of course, there are a number who recall the home and army experiences of the Civil War. Very many know from recollection and active participation in the Spanish War which was but a holiday frolic in comparison with what the country had previously experienced or what she shall experience. The Civil War was at our very door and, relatively speaking, it was but an arm's length from home to battle line. To operate as a partner in a war in another hemisphere, with a broad and dangerous ocean haunted by invisible death-dealing leviathans intervening between lines of supply and lines of action, will be an unique experience for our thrifty people who, by virtue of their education and traditions have held themselves forth as proprietors of a grand, sheltering national establishment devoted to the arts of peace and maintained as a refuge for those who enjoy tranquility.

It has been said if a good natured, kindly disposed and conciliatory man becomes thoroughly aroused that he is transformed into a most formidable pugnacious antagonist. He is the hardest person in the world to lick because, being slow to anger, he is slower still to

"cool off." I recall the story of a devout quaker who endured from morning to night the insults of a rowdy. When at night the rowdy pulled his ear, the quaker laid off his coat and gave the insolent fellow a thorough trouncing. The quaker justified his actions by saying the voice of God was speaking through his muscles and the kingdom of heaven must thereby be glorified. For two years, "through the broad earth's aching breast," the shriek of shrapnel and the howl of the howitzers has been "trembling on from east to west." This turmoil the President of the United States recognizes as the voice of God calling for millions of men and billions of money. The quaker is taking off his coat. Uncle Sam's ear has been tweaked one time too many and in the name of Great Jehovah and the Congress of the United States he has taken down his fowling piece and is filling his powder horn. American boys will soon be marching on foreign soil but to the music, we shall know, that makes men free. As they go upon their doubly perilous journey at the call of duty, what may their sisters do? In times of great stress and when all interests are mutual and vital all men become as brothers and all women are their sisters.

The women of the United States appreciate that they are as vitally interested in the public welfare as are the men. The men and women are joint owners of the country without partition or possible division of interest. Neither sex is master or servant. Neither is subordinate

or superior. There are not two social units, one male and the other female. All are equally responsible for the country's character and for her behavior in the affairs of the world.

Upon the women rests as much burden of the war as upon the men and they shrink not from their responsibility. The housewives, the homekeepers and all the others who are accountable for the maintenance of any kind of an establishment or institution must remain at their posts or think twice before making a change. Personal freedom will be restricted either by violation or by law, that others' wants may be satisfied and that the new order of things be brought to a victorious culmination.

What is commonly called spare time should be occupied in doing something to promote the war. All industries that are contributors to the public needs whether home, school, shop, farm or factory must go on with unusual regularity. Every wheel in the machinery of the community must be kept in motion. Any break will be a misfortune. Added burdens, if they do not impede personal efficiency in ordinary avocations, can be assumed. Beside what women must do, there are as numerous things that they should do as there are that the men will do. There will, of course, be a great amount of energy wasted in the spasms of excitement. The best that can be said for unnecessary productions is that they stand for a worthy intention. Cowhide shoes that the government furnishes will be more useful in the field than embroider-

ed slippers. A sheep's head canton flannel night cap will afford more comfort upon a cold night in camp than a silk lined "gentleman's friend."

The first excitement will settle down and misdirected energy will be directed effectively. Earnestness will devote itself intelligently to doing the most necessary things. In every neighborhood, hundreds of nimble needles will be sewing and knitting gifts from thousands of flying fingers made for the comfort of far away soldiers. It is all right for middle aged women of sedentary habit to knit socks and waistcoats, but the young, active, unattached women must do better than that. The most of them should be paid a reasonable price for their labors. They can not work for nothing because they, too, must subsist as well. According to their ability and experience they should be employed selectively. They can work in chemical laboratories, do lighter work in machine shops and factories. They can be timekeepers, paymasters, accountants, clerks, cooks, draughtsmen, waitresses, and operate vehicles that do not task their physical strength. They can do dairy work, sell tickets at depots, operate telegraph instruments, a field of unnumbered lines of service awaits them and they will be obliged if they do not do it freely, as the war goes on, to divert their attention from their selected channels to those imposed by necessity. They must cover the vacancies made by men so far as they can do.

Under government dictatorship, people who can af-

ford to waste will be obliged to save; those who can afford to loaf will be forced to work. What kind of goods a factory may turn out or what a farmer may produce will not be left to individual discretion. The consumer may prefer white bread, but as a war measure his flour may be mixed with corn meal. Competition will be selective and commodities must be regulated, not to suit the caprice, fancy or taste of fashion but so that the armies may be most effectively munitioned and equipped. War is an exacting business. We will learn to think in terms of war and will virtually act as a part of an immense militant machine. What emergency may necessitate can not be foretold, but it is certain the country is not going abroad upon a pleasant vacation trip.

We must thoroughly understand that the control of resources and of goods does not spring from the necessities of our own people. It arises from the tremendous obligation we have assumed of carrying the burden of supply for practically all the allies whoever they may be and also of seeing that the same be delivered. The world's market, for the present at least, like the consumer in any town, demands delivery at the door, or safe convoy of the same, and long credit. Not only that, the depleted ranks of the French army, it would appear, must be recruited upon American soil. Unless Providence soon shows his smiling face from behind the cloud, every man and every woman, as thousands are doing now, shall be accessory and agent to the fact of war. We are, as

yet, only in the first flush of the initial congestion, the full poison of the actual fever has not entered our veins. A vaccine for the fever of war does not seem at hand.

The greatest burden will rest upon the productive resources of the soil. We will have to furnish the food for our own people wherever distributed and for a great part of the world, beside. No man can fight, any more than he can do anything else, upon an empty stomach. The sinews of war center in the abdomen. There must be an uninterrupted supply of wholesome provisions to furnish, at least, fifty million meals per day for men who, themselves, can do nothing towards producing their own supplies. Besides this, there must be the cotton, the wool, the flax, the leather and whatever else yields fabric for clothing produced in equally increased proportion.

The necessary waste from war is enormous and when my estimate is corrected by fifty per cent, it will not be too great. Volunteering and conscription is to be selective. The burden imposed upon farm production can not be appreciated until the second year. Men who are disqualified for the battle field will qualify for the corn field. Farmers complain in normal times of the inability to secure labor. The one time hired man has passed into history. But the difficulty to secure service upon the farm does not lie entirely out of doors. The greater scarcity is in the house. When the number of farm hands is increased by state or government inter-

ference as it will probably have to be, washtubs will be made larger and dish pans will be multiplied. Bigger pots and kettles will be boiling to the brim upon the cook stoves. The overworked farmwife cannot serve them. There is as serious need of women on the farms as there is of men.

All about the town we see young men drilling for the marine service, for land service, for ambulance service, for engineering service, and even for the air above and for the bottom of the sea. For myself, I would like to recruit a collegiate battalion of dairy maids to be distributed among the wholesome farm homes of the country. No one wishes to see the American girl between the plow handles or upon the hay stack like the peasant women of foreign countries. While I admit such situations might be picturesque, it is quite unnecessary.

Every old time school boy remembers the story of Molly Pitcher. At the battle of Monmouth, Molly, who was a kind of camp follower, was carrying drinking water for the fighting men. Her husband, Tom, was connected with a battery and ramming the cannon. Tom was killed instantly. Molly grabbed up the rammer and served the gun in his place. There may be a few women who will wish to be Molly Pitchers and get into notoriety by undertaking the extraordinary. Some may wish to imitate even the fanatical Maid of Orelans. A woman is womanly so long as she is inside the range of her physical capacity and undertakes what other women can

do with propriety, beyond those limits, she is, to say the least, peculiar and probably out of place.

I appreciate that what I have been saying does not apply to a group of trained women whose line of action, by virtue of their professional attainments, lies marked out clearly before them. While what I have said may apply to some who have been over-hearing, I have a special word for you. Any person included in the wide field of medicine, and you come within that category, must be prepared to meet whatever exigency may occur and to assume his part. Any physician who refuses to take charge of a case of diphtheria, smallpox or any other disease to which he is called, because of fear of exposing himself, is a coward and unworthy the calling he has espoused. In civil life, there are frequent and dangerous risks, but it is a part of the business to face them manfully. Medicine and surgery are not altogether paths of pleasantness and of personal security. Any trained nurse from individual reasons, unless of course there be some justifiable exceptions who recoils from the bedside of a sufferer is unworthy her certificate. I would not be misunderstood. I have as strong condemnation for foolhardiness as for cowardice. To face liability under due and wise precautions is to do one's duty. To take an unnecessary chance or to run an unwarranted risk is not to be and should not be expected. If you feel disposed to enter the nurses' wing of the army, you will be acting under noble and most worthy

impulses. If you get married, my advisory function immediately closes. If you remain in general or institutional practice do not be opinionated but be ready to learn. Avail yourselves of every opportunity to improve personally and in professional attainments.

While nursing is classified among the charities, the one who follows it is deserving of her wages. Do not put pay before duty; however, pay for performing one's vocational duty is necessary. In a wide sense you should stand in society as an example of dignity and devotion. Become a necessary part of your community. Be influential among good women and hold out a sustaining hand to the unfortunate. Join the Red Cross Society. Have yourselves counted among the necessities of the world.

So soon as the ill and disabled troops begin to return for home treatment, all the hospitals will be needed and you will see something of the shadow if not of the substance of the war. If you volunteer for military service deport yourselves the same as you have done; ready for orders and exact in their execution. Be obedient to your superiors and considerate of your subordinates. Wherever you find duty calling do not forget that the institution that gave you your preliminary instruction stands ready to contribute, if possible, further assistance.

Those who are still in training must understand that their obligation is to finish their courses. When doctors and nurses are in so necessary demand as they are sure

to be, the government realizing the importance, requires that every student finish his course that he may eventually be of the greatest possible worth to the country.

Professional nursing may be said to have had its beginning in war. From the year 1853 to 1856 a war known in history as the Crimean War, was waged between England, France and Turkey, principals upon the one side, and Russia upon the other. The suffering from hardship, cold and hunger, among the English troops in particular, was very considerable. Infectious diseases, especially cholera, wrought great havoc among the troops. The British war department sent out to the Crimea a band of nurses at the head of which was Miss Florence Nightingale, a wealthy but very philanthropic young woman. She evinced great capacity for organization and, on account of her kindly nature, won the love of all who came under her directing care. A testimonial of two or three hundred thousand dollars was subscribed for her by the grateful English public. This fund she devoted to the founding of a training school for nurses in London. It probably is not over-stating in her commendation that she popularized and professionalized nursing. Thus you see, war was, in a very true sense, the occasion of the founding of your profession. Should you, as a field in which to manifest your skill and express your devotion, offer yourselves for some military hospital, you would be in your original element, and would also imitate a character worthy of emulation.

THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE PLEDGE

I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deliterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug.

I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping, and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling.

With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.

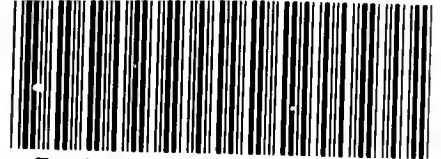
NOTE

Any part of any of the bulletins of this School that requires explanation should be made subject of written inquiry by interested persons.

Correspondence with those who may wish to ask specific questions or who desire advice is encouraged.

Students contemplating study in this School or preparation for such study, upon arriving in Ann Arbor, should report at the office of the Dean, in the Administration Building upon the hospital grounds, corner of North University and Washtenaw Avenue. The office will be open daily and a person competent to give information will be in attendance.

Letters of inquiry should be addressed to W. B. Hinsdale, M.D., Dean, Ann Arbor, Michigan.



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